

This week Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and key White House aides significantly intensified their rhetoric after an Israeli official announced plans to construct homes in east Jerusalem. Secretary Clinton said the timing of the announcement was “an insult” to the United States and top White House aide David Axelrod declared that it was “destructive” to Middle East peace. Many observers have noted that the Administration’s rebuke of Israel has created the highest tension between the two nations in decades.

I believe the Obama Administration is overreacting and is needlessly undermining our relationship with our strongest ally in the Middle East. What is especially appalling is that the Administration did not hesitate to strongly criticize Israel but has [tempered their condemnation](#) of Iran, a nation that most believe is close to

[developing](#)

a

[nuclear weapon](#)

and, according to recent congressional testimony from U.S. General David Petraeus, is providing support for al Qaeda terrorists. The Administration’s olive branch diplomacy toward Iran has clearly failed, and they are just recently getting serious about seeking international support for tough sanctions against the regime. In any event, it is the rise of a nuclear Iran, not Israel’s protested housing construction, that would be truly destructive to Middle East peace and stability. It is essential in such a dangerous region that we stand strongly with our friends in the face of the growing Iranian threat. The Administration should abandon its escalated rhetoric against Israel and instead focus on stopping Iran’s nuclear ambitions.